

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUXEMB 00549 161233Z

44

ACTION CU-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 USIA-15 /032 W
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R 161150Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4525
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS LUXEMBOURG 0549

PARIS AND BRUSSELS FOR USIS

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC (BERG, BERNARD), LU

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM: LUXEMBOURG NOMINEE

1. THE EMBASSY NOMINATES MR. BERNARD BERG AS FY 1976
IVP GRANTEE, AND PRESENTS THE FOLLOWING SUPPORTING
INFORMATION:

A. NAME: BERNARD BERG

B. PRESENT POSITION: MINISTER OF LABOR AND SOCIAL
SECURITY; FAMILY; NATIONAL SOLIDARITY, YOUTH AND HOUSING,
GOVERNMENT OF LUXEMBOURG

C. PAST POSITIONS:

1948-56; SECRETARY AND THEN PRESIDENT OF THE JEUNESSE
SYNDICAL (UNION YOUTH)

1956-61; LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE, THEN VICE PRESIDENT AND
EVENTUALLY PRESIDENT OF LAV (LETZEBURGER ARBECHTERVERBAND,
PRINCIPAL LUXEMBOURG TRADE UNION).

1961-74; MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF THE
SOCIALIST GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOR

1968-74; SOCIALIST DEPUTY IN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES. RESIGNED
ON BEING NAMED TO GOVERNMENT.

D. DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: SEPTEMBER 14, 1931, DUDELANGE,
LUXEMBOURG

E. TRAVEL ABROAD: IN ADDITION TO TRAVEL TO VARIOUS
COUNTRIES IN WESTERN EUROPE, MR. BERG HAS VISITED ROUMANIA.
MR. BERG HAS NEVER VISITED THE UNITED STATES.

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PAGE 02 LUXEMB 00549 161233Z

F. PREVIOUS U.S. GOVERNMENT GRANT: NONE

G. ESCORT: MR. BERG SPEAKS GERMAN, FRENCH AND HALTING ENGLISH. AN ESCORT/INTERPRETER WOULD PROBABLY BE REQUIRED.

H. VISA ELIGIBILITY: MR. BERG IS ELIGIBLE FOR A VISA.

I. REASON FOR NOMINATION: MR. BERG IS AN INFLUENTIAL MINISTER IN THE LUXEMBOURG COALITION GOVERNMENT WHICH CAME TO POWER IN 1974. A SOCIALIST WITH ROOTS IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT, MR. BERG IS THE ACKNOWLEDGED UNION REPRESENTATIVE IN GOVERNMENT COUNCILS. HE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES WHICH DIRECTLY AFFECT AMERICAN FIRMS OPERATING IN LUXEMBOURG.

2. ALTHOUGH HE HAS LITTLE FORMAL EDUCATION, MR. BERG IS INTELLIGENT AND SHREWD. HE IS A TOUGH-MINDED BUT JOVIAL MAN WHO IS IMMENSELY POPULAR AMONG RANK AND FILE UNION MEMBERS AND INCREASINGLY POPULAR AMONG THE SOCIALIST ELECTORATE AS A WHOLE. WHEN MR. BERG WAS NAMED MINISTER OF LABOR, THERE WAS SOME FEAR I LUXEMBOURG AND AMERICAN BUSINESS CIRCLES THAT HE WOULD BE RIGID AND DOCTRINAIRE IN REPRESENTING LABOR UNION INTERESTS. THIS HAS NOT BEEN THE CASE; ON THE CONTRARY, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAS BEEN PLEASANTLY SURPRISED BY HIS FLEXIBILITY, REALISM AND WILLINGNESS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL POINTS OF VIEW. BECAUSE OF HIS POPULARITY AND ABILITY, HIS POSITION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT IS SECURE AND HIS INFLUENCE IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO INCREASE. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT HE WILL PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN LUXEMBOURG POLITICS AND LABOR AFFAIRS FOR MANY YEARS TO COME. HE IS FRIENDLY AND FORTHCOMING WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS, BUT ALSO HAS GOOD RELATIONS WITH SOVIET BLOC REPRESENTATIVES. FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE OF THE U.S. WOULD GIVE HIM A MORE SOPHISTICATED UNDERSTANDING OF THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FORCES THAT SHAPE AMERICAN POLICY. DIRECT EXPOSURE THROUGH AN IVP GRANT TO THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT AND TO OTHER FACETS OF AMERICAN LIFE, WOULD, IN THE EMBASSY'S VIEW, PAY HANDSOME DIVIDENDS. FARKAS

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